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NEWS RELEASE

GQ MAGAZINE INTERVIEWS UD PROFESSOR ALEX CAMERON ON WORDS, DICTIONARY, TWO DECADES AS SPELLING BEE PRONOUNCER

DAYTON, Ohio — How do you spell GQ?

The popular men's magazine, known more for its love of Armani suits than academic contests, offers a Q&A interview with University of Dayton English professor Alex Cameron in its May issue, which hits the newsstands this week.

Cameron is the perennial ringmaster of the annual Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee, and May 29-31 will mark his 21st consecutive year as its pronouncer. While highly respected in spelling bee circles, Cameron has never been mistaken for the GQ "type."

"I thought they were calling me because I'm known as a model of sartorial splendor," Cameron quips. "Truthfully, I was quite surprised when I got the call. I guess they have some spelling bee groupies who work there."

According to GQ writer J.K. Hodgman, who interviewed Cameron, the assignment came from editor Adam Rapoport. "He's a big fan of the bee. Actually, there's a sizeable cadre of closet bee fanatics in New York City," says Hodgman, referring to the magazine's headquarters.

The Q&A section is a small box on the magazine's Fahrenheit page, a regular section reserved for news items on topics other than fashion and style. This month's cover features actor Ben Affleck.

In 1978 Cameron "tagged along" to the bee with then-pronouncer and UD colleague, the late Richard Baker. When Baker retired from the bee in 1979, event officials asked Cameron to take over. More than two decades, about 16,000 words and countless spellers later, he's still enunciating in perfect cadence to such words as "equamulose" and "vivisepulture."

This month marks the bee's 74th year, the country's longest-running educational competition.

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